

THE OMEN ISSUE 59.4

WHAT MATTERS MOST
IS HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF.



11/05/23

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Staff Box: (In order of appearance)

Max: how hungry?

Jay: baker's dozen

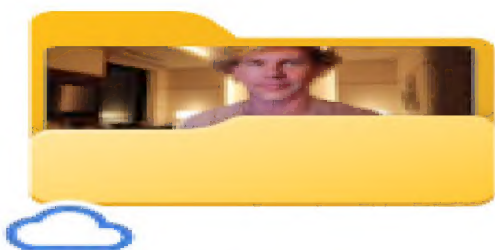
Mia: banana

Jack: VIII

María: ninjago

Willow: 8½

Nic: As many as it takes



laided

Front Cover: Maxine Aurelia-Ann Gamboa

Back Cover: Leo Zhang

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in any format (no PDFs please) by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu, the Omen Office, Mia's mailbox (1084), Willow's mailbox (1265), or Max's mailbox (0509).

Policy

The Omen is an every-other-week-ly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that break neither the law nor the Hampshire College Student Handbook. Send your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fanfiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry to omen@hampshire.edu; we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish.

Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which take place every other Friday at 7:00 p.m. in the basement of Merrill A. You should come and answer the staff box question. We don't bite. You can find the Omen every other Monday in Saga, the post office, online at expelallo.men, and just about any other place we can find to put it.

Find all issues here!



Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)

EDITORIAL

[Insert Title Here]

by Max, Willow, and Mia

I never planned for this (and that's okay)

By Maxine Aurelia-Ann Gamboa



I never planned to be the Omen editor. Dead of asses. Sure I planned to *read* the Omen when I remembered to pick a copy up, but I never anticipated attending layout.

Then life did that funny thing it always does when we flesh beings box ourselves up: it chucks the box into the trash and kicks us down the stairs.

*Or...*our plans change without us anticipating them to.

I grew up with my whole life planned for me.

My father was scared of his children going through the harm he had.

For some reason, my father thought that money could protect us from harm. People *couldn't* hurt us anymore if we had a good job and a cushiony adult lifestyle.

So, he prepared us to succeed. By pressuring us to have a career that made a lot of money or to be in the military (for much of my childhood he called me lieutenant), while not giving us any of the tools. So very quickly, I learned that success was figuring it out on your own and not asking for help. You were on your own.

So naturally, like any gifted kid who needed the praise of zyr parents, I accepted the box sketched out for me. I planned to have a husband, and maybe a few kids, but more importantly; I'd have a career that my parents wanted me to have.

The fucked up part was I genuinely thought the box was something I wanted. Once I entered high school, I was determined to become a lawyer who attended Georgetown. That plan, that box my father had constructed in my head, made me feel safe. Thinking of the future in a more abstract lens? That was scary.

Until I realized that things weren't so binary.

During my college search, my freshman-year writing teacher told me how she made her choice of college and didn't like it, so she transferred to UConn.

Rather than feel reassured by this, I panicked. What if I enrolled in a college and wanted to leave? Did I even have the funds to do that?

College felt like a decision that would be stamped into my life forever, especially as a kid from a school district where most of us don't get to go to college. I was terrified.

Junior year, Hampshire wasn't my first choice. It was a college my history teacher recommended to me since he attended UMass and thought Hampshire's culture spoke to my activist ways. I applied just in case I didn't like my first choice, Bennington College.

During a summer trip right before my Senior year, while stoned out of my mind in a minivan driving through Bennington's campus (I was not the one driving!!), I realized I didn't want to go there. The place didn't call to me, causing the looming fear to return. What the hell was I going to do?

I drew another box around myself and decided to take a shot at Hampshire College. I took the tour with my Grandpa and fell in love. It felt impulsive to like a school so quickly, but I knew I didn't want to tour anywhere else.

Great, now I knew what college I was going to. But what did I want to study? I had no idea.

I wasn't prepared to not have a box to doodle in, the unknown was terrifying. My plans were dissolving as I drafted them up. I had no idea what I wanted to do for the rest of my life while attending college, a place I perceived to be the foundation of my future.

This (more or less) is what I blabbed out to my psychology professor Dr. Ludwin-Peery. He listened, and then leaned back, I felt like a chihuahua shaking until they exploded.

“Why don’t you find what you want to do during your time here?”

I was stumped. I had no idea what I wanted to do, it was near the end of the semester. Surely all the doors were closed.

But, I wanted to try. So I attended Omen layout. I lived in Merrill and was friends with Leo which helped me feel less anxious.

During layout, we spent 30 minutes debating whether or not a smutty fanfiction should be added to the issue. I fell in love.

I wanted to edit the Omen. Despite knowing nothing of InDesign, Layout, or really much of the Omen in general, there was a feeling that jumped with joy when we looked over submissions.

So, I messaged Leo on Discord and asked (begged) if I could help out the Omen more in any way. A few days later I received a message asking if I wanted to be a co-editor next semester, I teared up and accepted.

Editing the Omen has been an *experience* so far. I did not plan to do this, yet now as I write this I am considering a career in editing. Seriously, I have been indoctrinated by editing.

Though that may change, and that is okay. Having our futures planned out isn’t necessarily evil. I know I still want kids, for example. But rather than worry about the where/how/when, I think of it as something that comforts me.

The many boxes I made for myself were not to hurt me, it was out of protection. To be less afraid of the unknowns that are life.

I think it’s valid to be scared, and it’s okay to not have the future planned out thoroughly. I certainly don’t!

To past, present, and future Max...I love ya, you lovely anxious ball of imagination. Take it easy, we’ll be okay. Go get some sleep!


To my fellow students, enjoy the current moments, and think of what excites you in the moment rather than what you *should* be doing in the future.

I promise that you’ll figure it out.



for as long as i have known i wanted to go to hampshire for college, i have held a firm belief in the concept of the omen. from the start i saw each as a perfect fit for the other, the wonderful democracy & inclusivity of this publication putting into practice the very ideals that the school itself was founded on. i admired how the omen distanced itself from the shortcomings of traditional campus newspapers, escaping their limitations & biases by doing away with the idea of work being “fit to print” & providing a voice to anyone on campus who felt the need to use it. the fact that it remained intact & apparently unchanged in its aims even decades after its inception also demonstrated to me that its original ideals had served it well & given it purpose at this school. together, all of these factors came to reinforce my image of the omen as a monolith of integrity & constancy for hampshire, & i hoped during my time in college to contribute to that legacy in whatever way i could.

since that time, of course, the previous editors of the omen have moved on to new things, & recognizing my drive to take part in its stewardship, asked me to be one of their successors. the position has given me a new perspective on the publication & on hampshire as a whole, & forced me to recognize that i have been seeing things backwards all along: the omen exists in service to our community, & not the other way around. it has lasted as long as it has not because of the flawlessness of its founding ideals, but because it satisfies the demand & holds the support of the student body, & by placing its aims above those of hampshire itself it ceases to be useful. for this reason, i have come to acknowledge the need for editorial policy which takes our role on campus into consideration. i & my fellow editors must be conscious of the fact that the omen does not exist in a vacuum, & that we are partially responsible for any harm done to the community by the work that we print. we must consider the ramifications of our decisions to publish divisive, aggressive, or careless submissions, & recognize that the policy of holding authors accountable for their own work does not guarantee that they will use their voices responsibly. above all, we must hope to avoid directly or indirectly bringing harm to our readers, our authors, or ourselves through our choices regarding the omen. i firmly believe that doing so is the best way for it to continue to serve the hampshire community as it has from the beginning, & to uphold the values of a shared public forum on which it was originally founded.

-willow watson 

Mia was too sleepy zzz...

SECTION SPEAK

Asexual representation in media (or lack thereof) and why it matters

By Arden Young

Author's note: I started writing this for Asexual Awareness Week, but that came and went too fast before I could finish... oh well, my point still stands! Also, I'm asexual, which is why I wrote this.

Asexual representation in media is few and far between. Usually the character is only confirmed to be asexual by the creator/author and it is never actually stated in the story, or it is just implied and never stated in or outside the story. There are a few really good and accurate examples out there, but I can think of less than 5 off the top of my head.

If you don't know what being asexual means, an asexual is someone who does not desire sex or doesn't want to have sex. They do not experience sexual attraction to others. Being asexual is different than being aromantic. Aromantic means someone who doesn't desire or want a romantic relationship. Some people can be aromantic (aro) and asexual (ace) at the same time, while some people can be just one of the above. This means that people who are asexual can still desire a romantic relationship, just not the sex part. This is different than celibacy, which is when someone chooses not to have sex or get married for whatever reason (usually religious), and it's very different than "waiting till marriage" (self-explanatory).

A funny tidbit is that aces in memes and pop culture are often associated with liking dragons, cake, space, and garlic bread, and those are some of my favorite things so I will gladly accept that as fact.

So, why is it important to have good ace rep in media? Only 1% of the population is asexual, so why should those people be portrayed in media? Well, I'll tell you why. For the 1% of people who are asexual, they deserve to see themselves in stories too. That's still 80,000,000 people who deserve to see fictional characters like them. Asexuals are often made fun of, belittled, and the target of offensive and intrusive questions and comments including but not limited to: "how do you know if you've never tried it", "you just haven't met the right person yet", "you'll change your mind when you're older", that sort of crap.

Look, I'm not stupid, I know there are so many other groups of people that deserve representation too, and I'm not saying aces deserve it more than anyone else, but that everyone deserves to see themselves in media, aces included. I promise you, there are probably a lot more aces out there than we think. And since we know for a fact that asexual people actually do exist, that means that fictional characters can be asexual too. Everyone has their own experiences and everyone is different, but if a person can relate to someone else (~~even~~ especially a fictional character) then that can help them feel validated and seen, and isn't that an awesome feeling? Also, isn't it much more fun when shows have different types of characters that represent different types of people instead of copy-and-paste clones and tropes?

I'm asexual, and I've had people tell me that they don't understand what it is, that it's sad I'm ace, or that it's not a real thing. This came from family and friends. I know people (usually) don't mean to be rude, they just don't understand what it means to be ace because they never heard about it before. So seeing fictional asexual characters in media not only makes the real aces feel seen, it also helps non-asexual people understand what being asexual means, and it can even help people realize that they're actually asexual if they didn't know before. However, this is only the case if the representation is done right, which has rarely happened yet.

Okay, to be fair, being asexual is a hard thing to talk about in some media. If the media is aimed at kids, it isn't appropriate to talk about sex, and if they can't talk about sex, then they can't directly talk about being asexual because it is the opposite of being sexual. You can't explain it without implying the other. Therefore, in order to have an asexual character that is explicitly stated to be asexual in the media, the story usually has to be aimed for older teens or adults. With these restrictions in mind, it is almost impossible for a show to have the right formula to be able to talk about asexuality, and to be able to do so with respect and care.

As a sex-repulsed asexual, it's hard to find an asexual character without shifting through the sludge of sex-filled media. A lot of adult media is filled with sex, too much so in my opinion. Of course I don't judge people if they like sex or seeing it in TV shows, and really I don't mind sex in media if it is not overdone. Also, it's strange that adult media doesn't mind mentioning sex left, right, and center, but in the real world it is usually considered taboo to talk about sex, so this is just a really strange double standard that I don't understand. It's also strange that society makes fun of people who are virgins but also makes fun of people (mostly women) who have too much sex... yeah, I really don't understand sex culture at all, and this is besides the point.

I also want to clarify that enjoying sex (safe and consensual sex please!!!) is perfectly normal and nothing to be ashamed about (cause ya know, 99% percent of the population aren't asexual). Humans literally need to have sex to keep the human race alive. People shouldn't be embarrassed to talk about sex, but asexual people should also be able to talk about how they don't like sex. Also, if someone doesn't want to talk about sex, whether they're ace or not, they don't have to. Simple as that! It really shouldn't be a big deal that some people just don't care for sex, but all the same that's why it's so important to talk about asexuality in media because like I said before, a lot of people just don't understand it or scoff at it.

Anyway, let's talk about the limited number of asexual characters in media, shall we?

The most well known and universally agreed upon best example of an asexual character is Todd Chavez from the show "Bojack Horseman". This example is great for many reasons:

1. It actually mentions in the show that the character is asexual.
2. The character goes through a journey of figuring out his asexuality.
3. The show explains what being asexual is and the difference between being aromantic.
4. The show never makes the character have sex to either confirm or "change his mind".
5. The character has a personality and hobbies so he's much more than just being asexual.

Todd is the perfect example of what an asexual character should be in media. He hits all the criteria and every other ace character that comes out after him should follow this example. He learns about what being asexual is and realizes that he's ace during the course of the show. He comes out to his friends and they support him instead of asking intrusive and offensive questions. He finds a girlfriend who is also asexual. He is a full character with his own story, relationships, hobbies, and other things that make him amazing. Being ace is a big part of his story without being the only part of his story. He is voiced by Aaron Paul, who played Jesse Pinkman in "Breaking Bad" (absolute legend). Aaron said in an interview: "I was so proud to represent that community. So many people came up to

me, or have been coming up to me, since that came out, saying, ‘I didn’t know what I was. You have given me a community that I didn’t even know existed,’ which is just so heartbreaking, but also so beautiful, you know?”

And if you’re going to ask me if I think that asexual characters should be played by asexual people, I’m going to tell you that I don’t give a flying fuck who plays the character as long as the character is portrayed correctly and with respect from the writers and from the actor (see above). Of course that’s just my opinion, as an ace. Also, it might be hard to find an asexual actor to play the part because there aren’t many (that we know of).

Another example of an asexual character is Alastor from “Hazbin Hotel”. He was confirmed outside the show by the creator, but time will tell if the new show coming out in January will either directly mention his asexuality or erase it (I really hope they include it because having an all-powerful demon be ace is such a power move). Jughead Jones from the “Archie” comics is confirmed to be asexual in the comic, but the show “Riverdale” that is based on the comic erased his asexuality because the show wanted to glorify teenagers having sex (which is a whole other can of worms we will not be getting into right now). This is sad because these shows had the opportunity to educate people about what it means to be asexual, and explore their characters more, but they didn’t take it.

Most characters in kids shows that are asexual are also aromantic, like Peridot from “Steven Universe” or Lilith from “The Owl House”. The characters are usually made to be aro and ace so they don’t have to talk about sex (or lack thereof) in the show, which as I mentioned before, is not appropriate to do in kids shows anyway. However, both of these examples were also confirmed outside the show, and not mentioned in the show at all, which is sad that their aromantic sides weren’t explored more (except for the fact that they never date anyone in the show). Another character that is asexual from a children’s show is Spongebob from “Spongebob Squarepants”, with the creator Stephen Hillenburg saying that he considers Spongebob “almost asexual.” While this also isn’t mentioned in the show because it is aimed for kids, I do love that Spongebob is asexual, because it definitely makes sense and is absolutely iconic, although it does fall into the trope of “asexual=immature”, something that even the aforementioned Todd, as great as he is, teeters on the edge of at times.

Many other characters are only implied to be asexual, like Sherlock Holmes from various “Sherlock Holmes” media, or Charlie Weasley from “Harry Potter”. However, these characters are only “implied” to be ace because they hyper-focus on other things, such as their work or hobbies. This isn’t great representation in my opinion because it implies that they are only asexual because they focus on other things. It makes it seem like they are too “busy” or “distracted” to think about sex, and therefore they must be asexual, because that’s how that works (I say sarcastically), while in reality asexual people of course have hobbies, but their interest in said hobbies isn’t what makes them ace, it is besides the fact.

There are also ace characters in the Netflix shows “Sex Education”, “Heartbreak High”, and “Heartstopper”. I haven’t watched them yet so I can’t judge how well their representation is, but I’ve heard some good things about some of them and some not so great things about others, let’s just leave it at that.

So in conclusion, I’d really like to see more asexual characters in media in the future. It isn’t enough to have a background character who is confirmed to be ace by the creator/author outside of the show, or to have a character that is only implied to be ace and not outright stated. I want the character to state that they are asexual in the story, and I want them to talk about it and explore it. I want them to be a fully fleshed out character with other aspects about them besides being asexual, while also highlighting and exploring their asexuality. Asexual people are just like non-asexual

people, they have their own hobbies and dreams, they just don't want to have sex. And is that really so hard to understand?

And now, I will leave you with some cruel responses some people made to the following comment about "Bojack Horseman". There are thousands upon thousands of comments praising "Bojack Horseman" for its representation, mostly from aces, but these cruel responses really stood out to me:

The comment:

@gusfleming6519 2 years ago

Bojack horseman helped me realize my own asexuality, it helped me discover that I was normal and I didn't need to feel bad for being myself, thank you from the bottom of my heart to everyone who worked on this show

 6K  Reply

Isn't that a heartwarming comment? Well, I guess not everyone thought so...

The cruel responses:

@Kalantinus94 1 year ago

Normal? It's just "unharmful" to others but asexuality is hormone imbalance and you better see GP. Don't want to scare you but asexuality might be a presage for a problem with hypophysis.

 2  Reply

@wynn1587 9 months ago

If you are male, that is especially not normal

  Reply

@nalry7831 8 months ago

Augh that's the kind of things I hate about shows like BH why does sex have to be part of everything okay you don't like sex? Keep it to yourself it's really annoying and.....sad

 1  Reply

Just food for thought. Bye for now, I'm going to go eat some cake and garlic bread. 

On preserving our unique party culture and harm reduction

By Juniper Balbus-Holmquist

Hello All campus,

I write to you as a fellow student, a fellow queer, a fellow stoner, a fellow neurodivergent person and a person in the work of just being a good dude (gender neutral)

I'm concerned not by parties, and not by CSW, I'm concerned not by drugs, and not by drug enforcement, I'm concerned not by death and risk of injury and I'm concerned not by paranoia of any kind on any side

I just want FOR US BY US care

Don't like cops?

Me fucking neither

Should your friend OD and die cause you didn't call I think not

See that's the balance

So to resolve this as lovingly as possible-/ keeping parties going, pigs off our campus AND beautiful lovely hampshire people safe

I propose the following

1. Don't be fucking stupid — I don't judge use— I have my boundaries and drugs of choice— you have yours
2. With that said— know when, how, why, where, what to go home
3. Go in with a quota of what ur gonna do and how much
4. I CANNOT STRESS THIS ENOUGH— if you're femme presenting or identified especially but really everyone have someone sober on speed dial and location sharing
5. CARRY FUCKING NARCAN IN THIS BITCH
6. When in doubt call prevention, CSW and then 911 in descending preference— CSW has medical help they can give— better than a bunch of coppies

7. If ur down or depressed or like just drinking yo lobotomize yourself not have fun— maybe don't go or at the very least have a cry space

8. Hot take: but a party with alc is not the best first time for psychs— it's fine but like I'd prefer a quiet national park

9. CHECK THE FUCK IN with literally everyone— if dude be tweaking have a plan- we love each other here

10. Worst come to worst realize that safety > raging — ur amp hamp not Alabama

Thanks for reading this— and I hope we can continue the traditions— just with a bit more love, care and trust

As always,

Sois Realiste, Demand L'impossible

Juniper Balbus-Holmquist 

Every Song in Glee and Whether or not it's better than the Original: Season 2A

By Finch Arnold

Glee starts to come much more into itself with Season 2. Some of the core characters finally get introduced (Blaine, Sam) or get promoted from secondary or recurring cast members to main characters (Santana, Brittany, Kurt kind of) and it really enhances things. More Kurt storylines means less room for Rachel and Schue storylines, and that's worth any cost. It's hard to imagine Glee with no Santana but there is in fact a full season of it. Same rules as always, but I'm skipping the Christmas episode so as to save the Christmas songs all for December. I'm planning a Christmas special. (Also it's very difficult to discuss Christmas songs because they're so widely covered, the Glee version isn't just competing with the original but with dozens of other iterations, some of which may be more widely known than the original version.)

Episode 1: Audition

Song: Empire State of Mind, originally performed by Jay-Z

Glee Performer: New Directions

Winner: Original

I can compare the quality of these until the cows come home but ultimately the Glee version doesn't sound like they're saying "concrete jungle wet dream tomato" so it's automatically worse.

Song: Telephone, originally performed by Lady Gaga and Beyoncé

Glee Performer: Sunshine Corazon and Rachel Berry

Winner: Original

Lea Michelle wasn't really acting in this scene. Anyhow, Rachel's voice is not suited for this and Beyoncé's verse sounds way better in the original.

Song: Billionaire, originally performed by Travie McCoy and Bruno Mars

Glee Performer: Sam Evans

Winner: Glee

Is now a bad time to admit I don't care for Sam? I don't hate him, he's not another Mr. Schue, but I find it very difficult to care about him at all. He's like if Finn had even fewer personality traits to rub together. And no, poverty is not a personality trait. When he was absent from the beginning of Season 3 I almost didn't even notice. Luckily for him, old Bruno Mars songs are some of the most obnoxious excuses for music ever.

Song: Listen, originally performed by Dreamgirls

Glee Performer: Sunshine Corazon

Winner: Tie

Insane serve. They sure love giving Sunshine Beyoncé songs to cover, huh? We're probably not going to see a matchup this stacked on both sides for at least another season. I actively listen to both of these, so it's a bit of an impossible decision, really.

Song: What I Did For Love, originally performed by A Chorus Line

Glee Performer: Rachel Berry

Winner: Original

Nobody cares what you did for love Rachel Berry, you sent someone to a crack house. I'm running out of ways to say that no matter how technically impressive she is, no matter how many big climactic notes that she belts out, nine times out of ten it just isn't enjoyable to listen to Rachel sing.

Episode 2: Britney/Brittany

Song: I'm A Slave 4 U, originally performed by Britney Spears

Glee Performer: Brittany S. Pierce

Winner: Original

Brittany (the Glee one, to be clear) isn't a very good solo singer, she shines in group songs.

Song: Me Against the Music, originally performed by Britney Spears and Madonna

Glee Performer: Brittany S. Pierce and Santana Lopez

Winner: Original

One part of this project that I didn't anticipate is that under absolutely every Santana song there will be "RIP Naya Rivera" comments, which just starts to feel ghoulish after a while. Anyhow, the Glee version here feels less cohesive than the original, the production isn't nearly as good.

Song: ...Baby One More Time, originally performed by Britney Spears

Glee Performer: Rachel Berry

Winner: Original

Points for effort, this is one of the few Rachel songs where she sounds at all interesting. However, as a running theme with these Britney songs, the production is nowhere near as good.

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Song: Stronger, originally performed by Britney Spears

Glee Performer: Artie Abrams

Winner: Glee

Artie's voice works surprisingly well for this. Easily the best song of the episode.

Song: Toxic, originally performed by Britney Spears

Glee Performer: New Directions

Winner: Original

Get out of here, Schue! Thank god they do a Schue-less version later on, or I'd be inconsolable.

Song: The Only Exception, originally performed by Paramore

Glee Performer: Rachel Berry

Winner: Original

I don't know why there's a random Paramore song in this Britney Spears episode, it's weird for me too. If I had a nickel for every Rachel song where she sheds a single tear while belting out a grandiose high note I would have enough money to hire a ghostwriter so I don't have to listen to her ever again.

Episode 3: Grilled Cheesus

Song: Only The Good Die Young, originally performed by Billy Joel

Glee Performer: Noah Puckerman

Winner: Original

Extremely ironic performer in hindsight. This song is a waste of my time.

Song: I Look To You, originally performed by Whitney Houston

Glee Performer: Mercedes Jones

Winner: Original

Why is Christian music always slightly boring? Whitney and Mercedes are both crazy vocal talents but I can think of very little to say about this song, other than that it is far too long. I arbitrarily declare Whitney the winner because I do not feel strongly about the issue.

Song: Papa Can You Hear Me, originally performed by Barbra Streisand

Glee Performer: Rachel Berry

Winner: Original

Lea's voice lacks a sense of texture.

Song: I Want To Hold Your Hand, originally performed by The Beatles

Glee Performer: Kurt Hummel

Winner: Glee

I'm going to drop a bit of foreshadowing for a later article here: I do NOT care for the Beatles at all. I at times recognize their artistic merit, but I still dislike them. They're a lot like Rachel Berry in that way. Fortunately, Kurt does a great job so I don't have to give The Beatles the win. It would sure be a shame if I had to call a Beatles song good during this project I'd be devastated. Good thing that's never going to happen.

Song: Losing My Religion, originally performed by REM

Glee Performer: Finn Hudson

Winner: Glee

He's doing all of this because of a grilled cheese, for the record. And he gave everything for that grilled cheese.

Song: Bridge Over Troubled Water, originally performed by Aretha Franklin

Glee Performer: Mercedes Jones

Winner: Glee

I have no strong draw to either of these, so I'm going to go with my gut.

Song: One Of Us, originally performed by Joan Osborne

Glee Performer: New Directions

Winner: Original

The original has such rich emotion, but the cover has a far more mixed level of quality.

Episode 4: Duets

Song: Don't Go Breaking My Heart, originally performed by Elton John and Kiki Dee

Glee Performer: Rachel Berry and Finn Hudson

Winner: Original

I heard a version of this at karaoke once. It made me want to eat poisons. This version is pretty unremarkable in the grand scheme of Finn/Rachel duets though. I wish there was a full version of the song from this episode where Finn is dressed like a priest and Rachel is dressed like a nun. Well, more like a nun than usual.

Song: River Deep – Mountain High, originally performed by Ike & Tina Turner

Glee Performer: Mercedes Jones and Santana Lopez

Winner: Glee

This has a very good claim to being the show's best duet.

Song: Le Jazz Hot, originally performed by Victor/Victoria

Glee Performer: Kurt Hummel

Winner: Original

Julie Andrews is so good.

Song: Sing!, originally performed by A Chorus Line

Glee Performer: Tina Cohen-Chang and Mike Chang

Winner: Glee

This show has had far too many different songs named Sing. I don't really know how to evaluate this one since part of the bit is that one of the performers can't sing well at all. But Tina is really great in this, so I'll give her the win. God knows she could use one.

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Song: Lucky, originally performed by Jason Mraz and Colbie Caillat

Glee Performer: Sam Evans and Quinn Fabray

Winner: Glee

All this song does is serve as a reminder that they did two Britney Spears episodes but never covered her version of Lucky. Kudos to Ryan Murphy though, this song suits Sam and Quinn's voices perfectly. This is one of the least cover-sounding covers to come out of Glee. Many of Glee's songs have an... artificiality to them, they just sound like covers. But this one feels natural and effortless. I don't think this is the best duet of the episode, but I'm not mad it won.

Song: Get Happy/Happy Days Are Here Again, originally performed by Judy Garland/Barbra Streisand

Glee Performer: Rachel Berry and Kurt Hummel

Winner: Glee/Glee

The originals really are quite uninspiring, at the end of the day.

Episode 5: The Rocky Horror Glee Show

Song: Science Fiction/Double Feature, originally performed by The Rocky Horror Show

Glee Performer: Santana Lopez

Winner: Glee

I feel like this song does not need to be this long. However, Santana has yet to have a song I didn't adore.

Song: Over At The Frankenstein Place, originally performed by The Rocky Horror Show

Glee Performer: Rachel Berry and Finn Hudson

Winner: Original

This is among my least favorite Rachel performances and I can't for the life of me put my finger on why.

Song: Dammit Janet, originally performed by The Rocky Horror Show

Glee Performer: Finn Hudson and Rachel Berry

Winner: Glee

Finn is at the top of his game here.

Song: Hot Patootie - Bless My Soul, originally performed by The Rocky Horror Show

Glee Performer: Carl Howell

Winner: Glee

They just keep doing it, it's bewildering to me too. The songs in this episode are just crazy good for some reason.

Song: Sweet Transvestite, originally performed by The Rocky Horror Show

Glee Performer: Mercedes Jones

Winner: Glee

Tim Curry is undeniably the better performance acting-wise, but that is not what I'm here to judge. I judge vocals, and I think Mercedes' are just better.

Song: Touch-A, Touch-a, Touch-a, Touch Me, originally performed by The Rocky Horror Show

Glee Performer: Emma Pillsbury

Winner: Glee

I do have to pretend she's not singing it to Will Schuester to truly enjoy it, but I like this cover quite a bit. Emma really does deserve more songs because she absolutely destroys it with this one.

Song: Time Warp, originally performed by The Rocky Horror Show

Glee Performer: New Directions

Winner: Original

I watched an Easter play that had this song in it once, good times. Kurt and Quinn do a great job, but the original is way too iconic to be outstripped by Glee.

Episode 6: Never Been Kissed

Song: One Love/People Get Ready, originally performed by Bob Marley & The Wailers

Glee Performer: Noah Puckerman and Artie Abrams

Winner: Original

This is not actually a mashup, the original just interpolates People Get Ready, it's a whole thing. Puck's voice is more tolerable when accompanied by another voice (and fortunately, most of his songs are duets) but if the best thing I can call a song is "tolerable" then I think it may not be very good. Side note, Artie is definitely gay for Puck. I want to make sure that we're all clear about that one.

Song: Teenage Dream, originally performed by Katy Perry

Glee Performer: The Warblers

Winner: Original

I'm not calling them The Dalton Academy Warblers no matter what anyone says. The Warblers wear out their welcome astonishingly fast, but for the time being I do enjoy them. They largely suck after this season (as does Blaine, coincidentally) but I can at least see why they were initially popular, even if they're vastly overrated. All that aside, Teenage Dream is the best song Katy Perry has ever made, so it would take a lot more than a dozen pretty boys doing a capella to improve on it. Honestly I feel like I remember the Glee version being better than it actually is.

Song: Start Me Up/Livin' On A Prayer, originally performed by The Rolling Stones / Bon Jovi

Glee Performer: New Directions Girls

Winner: Glee/Glee

It's pretty clear who, between the boys and the girls, won this contest. I think it has been made abundantly clear that I'm not exactly crazy about classic rock, but I especially dislike Livin' On A Prayer. I wouldn't mind never hearing it again, honestly. Plus the harmonies on this go crazy.

Song: Stop! In The Name Of Love/ Free Your Mind, originally performed by The Supremes / En Vogue

Glee Performer: New Directions Boys

Winner: Original/Original

These "all boys" numbers never use Kurt basically at all. Have I talked about Kurt at all yet in these articles? Because it feels like I haven't. I think that's a bad call, because the rest of the boys range from really good (literally just Artie) to sometimes passable (Sam, Finn) to awful (Puck). It's a lot of mediocrity in one song, is what I'm saying.

Episode 7: The Substitute

Song: Forget You, originally performed by Cee Lo Green

Glee Performer: Holly Holiday

Winner: Original

Gwyneth Paltrow can sing far better than I would expect, though I do mainly know her as the woman who sells jade vaginal eggs so perhaps I'm biased. Did you know that she sells candles that (allegedly) smell like her vagina and one of them exploded and killed a man? I make a point of telling everyone I can this information, it's very important to me.

Song: Make 'Em Laugh, originally performed by Donald O'Connor

Glee Performer: Will Schuester and Mike Chang

Winner: Original

The beautiful thing about the later seasons of Glee is the drastic decrease in Mr. Schue songs. This season gets us down from 12 to 8, and Season 3 shaves us down to a refreshing 4. (This doesn't count songs in the Christmas episodes because I do not consider them real episodes.) Now, Matthew Morrison is an adequate enough singer I'm sure, but he has zero good songs on this show. The original is also much better acted which is honestly the most important

Song: Nowadays/Hot Honey Rag, originally performed by Chicago

Glee Performer: Holly Holiday and Rachel Berry

Winner:

Also not a mashup, despite the slash in the title. In the original, the singers' voices play off each other very well, but I can't say the same for Holly and Rachel.

Song: Singin' In The Rain/Umbrella, originally performed by Gene Kelly/Rihanna

Glee Performer: Holly Holiday and Will Schuester

Winner: Original

I don't like Will in this at all and Holly is very much no Rihanna, though she's fine enough. Holly is always okay, but rarely excellent.

Episode 8: Furt

Song: Ohio, originally performed by Wonderful Town

Glee Performer: Sue Sylvester and Doris Sylvester

Winner: Glee

If someone's only experience with Glee was these articles for some odd reason then they'd probably think Sue was some minor character instead of being one of the main characters and in every episode, since this is her third song so far while every other major character is well into double digits by now. Fun fact, due to various internet memes, it is harder than it should be to find the song Ohio. I actually like this one, it's pretty overhated.

Song: Marry You, originally performed by Bruno Mars

Glee Performer: New Directions

Winner: Glee

This song is NOT 13 years old. I refuse to accept that as true. The voices in this song all play off each other wonderfully, but I have to give a shout out to Artie as the highlight.

Song: Sway, originally performed by Michael Bublé

Glee Performer: Will Schuester

Winner: Original

I have long-standing beef with Bublé but I also have long-standing beef with Schuester so it cancels out. But at least Bublé has a respectable voice! Will is a joke, comparatively. He is also a joke not comparatively.

Song: Just The Way You Are, originally performed by Bruno Mars

Glee Performer: Finn Hudson

Winner: Original

Big season for Bruno Mars, for some reason. I'm not a huge fan of his early work, as I've said, but, no mincing words, Finn is usually not a very good singer.

Episode 9: Special Education

Song: Don't Cry For Me Argentina, originally performed by Evita

Glee Performer: Rachel Berry and Kurt Hummel

Winner: Glee

The Glee version seemingly only has extended versions of Kurt and Rachel solo, not the duet version, so I'm working off of the shortened version that's in the actual episode and you're going to have to make your peace with that. I'm not very fond of Evita, or either version of this song, but the Glee version is at least not actively boring to me.

Song: The Living Years, originally performed by Mike + The Mechanics

Glee Performer: The Hipsters

Winner: Glee

In the original, are The Mechanics that choir of children? Because I don't know who else The Mechanics could be. I don't like Mike or his Mechanics very much at any rate.

Song: Hey Soul Sister, originally performed by Train

Glee Performer: The Warblers

Winner: Glee

The original is a guilty pleasure of mine, but it's not a very good song. The Warblers can't fix the terrible lyrics (I'm so gangster I'm so thug, front lobe of my left side brain, et al) but they can patch up the vocal shortcomings.

Song: (I've Had) The Time of My Life, originally performed by Bill Medley and Jennifer Warnes

Glee Performer: Sam Evans and Quinn Fabray

Winner: Glee

I'm quite fond of the original, but at the end of the day Bill Medley does not sound very good and I am infatuated with Quinn and Sam as vocal partners.

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Song: Valerie, originally performed by Amy Winehouse

Glee Performer: Santana Lopez

Winner: Tie

The Santana song. It's her Don't Rain On My Parade (even though she does also sing Don't Rain On My Parade later but that's not for ages). This is one of the canonically great Glee covers, but Valerie is such a good song. Thus, a tie, since I actively enjoy both.

Song: Dog Days Are Over, originally performed by Florence and the Machine

Glee Performer: Tina Cohen-Chang and Mercedes Jones

Winner: Tie

This song has been in an MCU movie, just food for thought. I have both of these on playlists, so it's only right to call it a tie.

Episode 11: The Sue Sylvester Shuffle

Song: Need You Now, originally performed by Lady A

Glee Performer: Rachel Berry and Noah Puckerman

Winner: Original

Puck's voice is not very good! It is, in fact, like nails on a chalkboard. When he's singing at the same time as Rachel, it kind of works, it makes me like both of them a lot more, but the sections where it's just Puck singing border on unlistenable.

Song: She's Not There, originally performed by The Zombies

Glee Performer: New Directions

Winner: Glee

When I first listened to the original I liked it and then I stopped liking it and then I started liking it again for a bit and then the pitchiness of the vocals started to bother me and I ended the song not really caring for it. The Glee version has the enjoyable bits and largely lacks the annoying parts, fortunately.

Song: Bills, Bills, Bills, originally performed by Destiny's Child

Glee Performer: The Warblers

Winner: Original

The a capella actually makes this sound quite bad, and Blaine doesn't have the gas in his tank to make up for it, as he is neither Beyoncé nor Kelly Rowland. And his backup singers are really giving nothing. Where are the harmonies??

Song: Thriller/Heads Will Roll, originally performed by Michael Jackson/The Yeah Yeah Yeahs

Glee Performer: New Directions and McKinley High Titans

Winner: Original/Original

Now, my natural desire is to end these articles with a competition. However, Glee really doesn't like dividing its seasons with competitions, annoyingly, so I have to end this issue of The Glee Project with a random filler episode. This mashup is fine, and very little more. Everything about Heads Will Roll that's interesting has been totally lost here and there's obviously no competing with a bona fide classic like Thriller.



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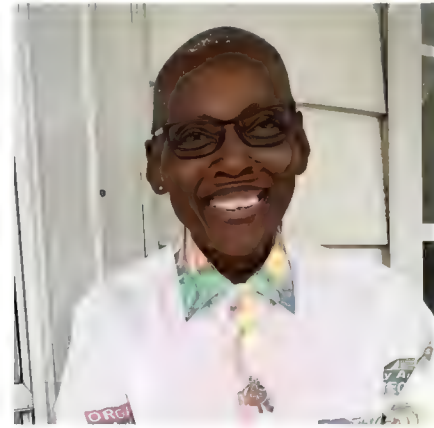


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WITH ANY QUESTIONS



HELP SAVE EDDIE'S HOME

Eddie Swan is a neighbor, friend, and Black elder known for her over 50 years of social justice work in Black and LGBTQ communities of NYC and Durham, North Carolina. Unfortunately, due to gentrification in historically Black Durham, Eddie will lose her home if she cannot raise enough to buy it by the end of the year. Any donations help!



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For questions, please email Zed Marty (a Hampshire student and friend of Eddie) at zjm23@hampshire.edu



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SECTION LIES

Tale of Two
By: Clay Kesling

A forest of proud oaks tower all above and around me. They have lived to see the death and life and war and famine of man. Been here far longer than anyone living and will stand far longer than anyone born. My boots stomp down on the firm ground. That's how you know these woods are old. The soil, tough as a boulder. The roots and plants are embedded in the soil, creating an impenetrably dense ground. The sun gleams heavily. It isn't overbearing, as the canopy of leaves blocks out most of the light. The sun's glare bleeds through the leaves, creating shadows that dance like pirouettes.

The tunes and bustle of town carry through the air like a soft breeze. The tavern sings with lutes and jigs and joyous laughter. An enveloping scent of baked meats, fresh cheeses, warm-watery stew, and freshly brewed ale. Here I am again. Caught up in the surrounding area. Caught in the clouds looking down at myself. Evaporating from the mossy woods into the sky. Breathing in the fresh air above like a free bird in the wind. Gazing upon the land below. The people dancing and singing. The livestock carrying out their daily routines. The billowing smoke in the distance from the recent toils of men. The darkened thunder-filled clouds coming in from the south. I better ground myself again. COME BACK DOWN!

My feet pound the tough dirt again. Here I am. Here I walk. Making my way down deeper into the oak forest-away from the bustle of town-fading into silence. There is no man-made noise other than my steps and my breath. I steady myself. I open my ears. The deep chorus of toads, frogs, and all sorts of critters arise around me. The southern wind collides with trees, vines, grasses, and plants. The creek trickles softly. Birds sing their sweet music. It's melodic all around me. An orchestra of coexistence. It's inexplicably peaceful. It's consuming my soul-filling me up like a tankard at the pub. Revitalized by the life all around me. My mind begins to rise up into the clouds again when I am suddenly interrupted by the sound of breaking branches. Too abrupt and steady to be a creature. Too docile to be an army. Abandoning my ears for a moment, I use my eyes to scope around. Who is it? What do they want? Why are they here? QUIET!

There I go again, caught in my thoughts and mind. Abandoning my eyes... I focus again. Nothing in sight. My ears open. The soft, sturdy steps pound on the firm earth in front of me. Spotted. "WHO GOES THERE?!"-I hear from this mysterious figure behind the brambleberry bushels. "I go here. Tis me. Tis I," I say. "TIS WHO?"- The old, weathered voice croaks. I never do run into people out here. I can't say I was prepared to interact with anyone. "Why must you know?" I say softly but clearly. "I have walked many paths. Seen many people. Heard many tales. I seek but a name as I know many." they say. I glance around me to chart the path back to the town. I listen for more boots, wondering if they're alone. "I am but a fellow wanderer. A fellow walker of paths and hearer of stories. No harm will come unless prompted," I say orderly. "Thee who does not share thy name is thee who walks the clouds, shares the stories of life, tastes the wonders of humanity, and smells the rains that flood these woods," they say.

"I may have a taste for escaping these treacherous times and soaring up above where I remain untouched," I say back. "Then we are one and the same. We have collided here. But not really. We walk a similar path. We hear the same birds. We follow the same creek," they say. Their words reverberate throughout me as though they are written and not voiced. I repeat them over and over. Line after line. Word after word. "In life and in death and in life again, we will intersect and intertwine like the very roots below our feet. The risen and rising bodies and souls will meet above the trees. Above the clouds. Above the stars. Above all. But we stand here. We remain grounded by our feet." The words slip out like a waterfall. Unstoppable. Out of my brain. Unapproved. Lopsided in insurmountable ways. Usurped. Unavoidable. Each waking moment and breath carrying to the next. Slicing like a blade on a battlefield through my very essence—they croak but a concluding ode- "For in this moment and in the next we will still be here. We will preside in this ancient forest. With these ancient birds. These ancient rains. These ancient paths. These meaningless wars. These meaningful lives. These erupting songs. These singing taverns. These. These. These." My mind fades into words, making sentences. My breath evaporates into an emulsion of raindrops and mud. I live. I die. I exist. I try. I fear. I cry. I laugh.

My eyes shoot open. My ears perch up. "Hello?" I call out. But this mysterious voice has gone and left. Maybe they sit above these trees. In the clouds for nobody to see. Gazing upon the lands. Gazing upon the seas. No matter-for here I stand in the same place at the same moment. The canopy grows darker as the sun waves goodbye. I retreat back to the town I know as home. The taverns still sing their songs. The people still drink their drinks. The meats and cheeses still fill my nose. The tall oaks still stand tall. The roots burrow deep. The feet touch the earth. The breath maintains pace. The eyes grow wary. For tomorrow, I will begin again along my path, in the sky...on this ground...



An Open Letter – They Don't Know About The Hole

By John Snyder

Dear Sirs,

I am addressing this missive to any and all Hampshire Students who are interested. You see, I have a secret. A secret that I, until now, have never broached to any one soul in a serious manner. This is for no reason in particular, part of me is afraid of telling the truth, part of me enjoys the idea of it being a hee hee haha funny joke, and some part of me truly enjoys the mystique.

For those of you who don't know me, I am a pretty average guy. I wake up early, go to class, study, write my papers, go to work, practice my piano, hit the gym, and I get to bed at a decent time every night. I seldom find myself in the need of familiar or neighborly companionship, I have my partner (soon-to-be wife!) and I have my toy poodle, Charlie; and that is all I truly need in life. Or so I tend to display.

If you have had the opportunity to discuss certain matters with me, you may have heard me make a joke; I make it quite infrequently. The joke revolves around *The Hole*. This joke will garner a few laughs in any given situation, perhaps some worried looks, and the usual query "The hole!?" To this, I respond with laughter, dismissing the exchange as a mere facet of an amusing evening—a lighthearted banter to provoke amusement, a performative gesture.

I am here to tell you that the hole is real, and nobody truly knows about it.

When I am not studying, or working, or in class, etc. etc... I will be thinking about the hole. It is out there, in the wilderness, waiting. I am a busy man, and therefore, do not have time to dig much. But I treat it as it should be treated.

I ensure I make regular trips to The Hole, check its integrity, see if it needs anymore wood supports, measure its depth and size. And on occasion, I get to dig, I liken my digging sessions to be like fine wine – exquisite indulgences. Did I get an A on that exam? Dig. Did we receive an excellent eval? Dig. A surprise sojourn of my beloved? Dig. It's really quite relaxing. I get to spend hours, shoveling the land, drinking cold beers, and realizing, in a tangible form, my Minecraft Steve fantasy. As of this present moment, The Hole stands as a vast, profound marvel, an entity that captivates me daily. I do not have pictures, as I believe that would sully the sanctity of our bond, I do not know the exact coordinates of The Hole, I rely solely on physical cues to get to its location. The Hole is my private realm, a sanctuary shrouded in secrecy, a treasure concealed.

Your thoughts, I anticipate:

“Yeah yeah, John, it's somewhere in the woods. Everyone goes out there, a lot of people have probably been to your weird hole.”

Sorry to correct you but no, *nobody* knows about The Hole. And I know that to be a fact. Because I have installed three motion sensors and two motion cameras at and around the areas of entry toward **MY** Hole. This includes large radius motion tracking and a heat detection system. I know for a fact that nobody has **ever** been to my Hole. The Hole acknowledges only my presence, it is a wild expanse materializing solely when I draw near. May it endure thus, for scarce is the privilege of owning something uniquely ours within Hampshire's domain. May The Hole forever remain an enigma.

Sending this epistle to The Omen's revered scribes, I am filled with jubilant trepidation. This is something that I have not actually confessed to anyone, not even those I hold closest to my heart. As such, I will act as if this letter never happened. If you try to confront me about The Hole, I will deny knowing of its existence. I refuse to elaborate on its location, size, or age. The Hole is mine and mine alone. And my admission of its existence and importance will remain within the confines of this letter.

May this narrative resonate with you, stir your spirit, and invigorate your intellect. I trust you find solace in this glimpse into my verity. And I hope you don't stumble upon a large pit in the Earth on your next hike. Because I will know if you did; and we wouldn't want that.

Respectfully and Sincerely,

John Snyder 

EDITOR'S NOTE (MAX):

Oct 27, 6:59 PM

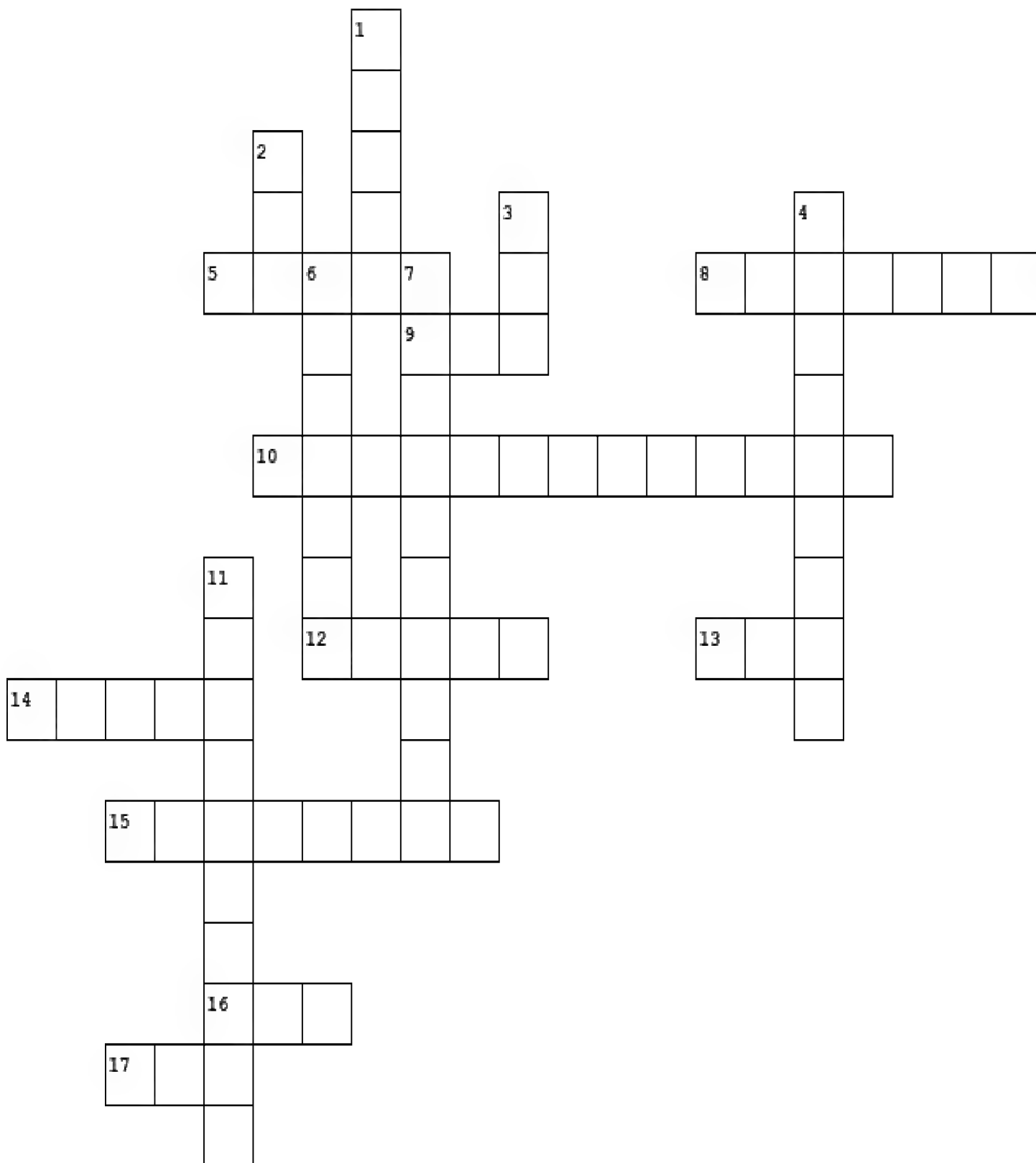
I'm doing omen layout tonight and didn't notice your paper until I went to go refill something 😊
john what is this



❤️ 1

Hampshire College Crossword

By Jack Brady



DOWN	
1.	DEAN OF STUDENTS ZAUYAH
2.	(ACRONYM) WHERE DEATHFEST WAS HELD THIS YEAR.
3.	(ACRONYM) WHERE THE LARGEST LECTURE HALL IS LOCATED.
4.	THE DESOLATE DONUTS.
6.	THE MULTICOLORED VILLAGE.
7.	THE OMEN'S FAVORITE PHRASE.
11.	THE OMEN'S REAL MASCOT ED

ACROSS	
5.	THE OMEN'S MASCOT.
8.	HELL'S NICER OLDER BROTHER.
9.	(ACRONYM) THEATER AND HUMANITIES HUB.
10.	THE ALL-DAY BUFFET.
12.	WHAT HAS FAMOUSLY DISSAPPEARED FROM THE OMEN OFFICE.
13.	(ACRONYM) THE SCIENCE BUILDING.
14.	SEE ALSO: HELL.
15.	HOME OF THE TAVERN.
16.	(ACRONYM) LOUNGE OPEN 24 HOURS
17.	(ACRONYM) BUILDING WITH GYMNASIUM THAT HAS ROCKS FOR WALLS.



CONTENT WARNING FOR SUBMISSION: DETAILED
DESCRIPTIONS OF CYBERSTALKING, DEATH, MULTIPLE
REFERENCES TO TORTURE/EXECUTION/GORE

The House Where Chris Ressler Lives

By Nicholas Utakis-Smith

Chris Ressler was my housemate back in college. Because of that I knew him far better than anyone should know anyone else. I knew his sins and vices better than even he did. I watched the events of his life on Facebook and Instagram after we both had graduated, and I saw everything that went well for him in his life. His job promotion, his marriage, his moving to a fancy suburban home, all made me existentially horrified. In a just world, he would have received his comeuppance for what he did back when I lived with him. But every wonderful thing that happened to him was preparation for the one big thing that was going to take all of that away from him. If misfortune wasn't going to bring justice to him on its own, I would be the one to bring misfortune into his life myself.

I should probably mention that I have a certain...hobby. Some people try to make the world a better place by going to 3rd world countries and building houses, or by campaigning for politicians. I have a bit more of a unique method. Around 5 years ago my mother passed away, and I inherited a lot of money. After I had made my peace with her death, I set about deciding what to do with my new life as a rich man. With social media, it's possible to learn a surprising amount about strangers. Combine that with how much you can get a person to tell you about themselves over a couple beers, and I've learned a lot about people. Most people I know are good people, and once I've figured that out, we go our separate ways.

Sometimes, though, I figure out that a person is downright despicable. An absolute monster who does nothing but drain everything of value out of every life they stumble into. When that happens, I already know enough about them to kill them. I know how to isolate them, end their life, and dispose of anything that could tie the crime back to me. It's hard work, but I don't really need a job for income so it gives me something to do with my time.

When I found out Chris was moving to New Cannington, a town that's 30 minutes away from my house by car, I felt ecstatic. It reminded me of when I was in college and the professor assigned us to read *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell, a book I'd reread for several years up until that point. For that entire unit I was able to coast on the knowledge I already had, and it was the most relaxed I'd ever felt in college. I already knew about Chris. Not just the kind of man he was when we lived together, but the man he'd become since. I didn't have to figure out whether he was worthy of being kept alive, or how I could get close to him. He hadn't been thoughtless enough to leave his new address online, but he'd put enough photos that a quick google search could tell me not only how to get to his house, but also several alternate routes I could take to avoid traffic.

I was going in the middle of the day so I wasn't too worried about the delays, but I like to avoid passing by people.

I pulled into the parking lot of a Stop & Shop a little ways outside of New Cannington, and started walking towards the street Chris' house was on. I wanted my car to be parked a little ways from where the murder scene was going to be, and I liked getting the exercise. The house was exceedingly ordinary for a suburban town, a two story building with sloped roofs and a white facade, flat, even grass in the lawn in front, and a large garage to the side of the building. I was led by the asphalt path cutting through the lawn up to the stairs and onto the porch, and right up to the door, and I tapped my knuckles in the center of the painted wood. I tend to err on the side of too quiet rather than too loud with my knocking, to avoid startling people before I make my appearance. I must have tapped a bit too quietly, as I didn't hear any particular response. I noticed the button for the doorbell on the side of the door, and, putting aside the pride I took in my inoffensive door-knocking, pushed the button.

The woman who responded to the chime of the doorbell was obviously not Chris Ressler. I mean, don't get me wrong, if Chris had begun to dress like a woman I wouldn't judge him (or her), but I had been monitoring Chris' online presence closely enough since our mutual graduation that I feel like I would know if such an important event had come up in his life. All this is besides the point anyway, this woman looked nothing like Chris. So when she asked me in a pleasant voice "Hello, what can I do for you?" I responded with the question that her presence had put in my head:

"Is this the house where Chris Ressler lives?"

The woman's expression shifted into something I didn't recognize for a brief moment before something between confusion and concern. She said "My family has lived in this house for generations. I think that name might ring a bell though, I can check if you'd like."

At this invitation, I was drawn back in again. I could find Chris whenever I wanted, but one problem with my reliance on people's social media presence was how little exposure I had to people who weren't as on the grid. I needed more days when I just went out into neighborhoods and met random people, and figured out what kind of person they were, good or bad. So I seized this opportunity to learn, to find out what kind of woman lived here. "If you could help me figure out where Mr. Ressler lives, that would be very appreciated, ma'am. I didn't catch your name, by the way."

"You can call me Barbara. Come inside, I'll have Logan get the records for you.", She said. Things were going even better than I hoped. I followed her inside, the door clicking shut behind us. Inside, she led me to the dinner table. Two children were at the dinner table, a boy who looked to be in his teens, and a girl who looked like she was probably still in middle school. Barbara made a cutting motion across her neck with her hand, gesturing to the boy, who I assumed was "Logan", and pointed to the top of the stairs. He climbed up the stairs as Barbara sat down at the table, and gestured for me to do the same.

"I don't believe I caught your name. Who are you and what do you do for a living?" Barbara said, staring me down. I'd developed a cover story for myself, to hide my occupation or lack thereof.

Not that there was anything inherently suspicious about being unemployed and living off your inheritance, but certain jobs can make you unsuspicious. The way I laid it out to Barbara is as follows:

“My name is Ken Landon. I work as a set designer for a film studio and I scout out potential filming locations. I’m living about half an hour out of town in order to determine whether New Cannington would be a good location to shoot in.”

Barbara put on the electric kettle in her kitchen as she replied, “And what about that man you were talking about earlier, what was his name? Mr Renssalaer?”

I smirked, hoping she wouldn’t notice. “Chris Ressler was a roommate of mine in college. I heard he was in the area so I wanted to meet up to reconnect. What do you folks do around here?” I said. This flow of conversation excited me, the feeling of giving a perfectly unsuspicious answer and turning the tables on my would-be interrogator was quite a rush, and yet it was at the same time quite relaxing.

“I mostly stay at home and raise the kids. We don’t really need to work with the money we have from the family funds.” Barbara said.

“What about the kids’ father? Are you separated?”

“He’s...passed. We had a falling out before that, so I don’t miss him as much as some might expect me to.”

This woman was proving to be an interesting case. I wanted to keep pulling at this thread, to find out how her husband had passed, what this falling out had been. I wanted to get to know her kids, see what they were like as people, see what they thought of their mother. Before I could dig deeper into this, I heard a young man’s voice from up the stairs say, “The name is in our book.”

Barbara and the young girl both looked directly at me, with a mixture of surprise and malice. Had they figured out my motives? Surely there was no way, but something I had done had made them suspicious. I pretended to check my phone, and said, “Oh shit, I had to be at a zoom meeting with the producer 15 minutes ago.”, as I got up and pulled on the door handle.

The door rattled in place. It was locked. I poked around the door for a latch, but strangely enough there was a keyhole on the inside. I spoke while staring at the lock, “Excuse me, Barbara, but can you unlock your door? I really must be going.” As I did, I turned my head to see Logan coming down the stairs. In his hands, he held a massive, weathered book that looked like it weighed almost as much as he did. With his hands he clutched to the top of the book an ornate knife, with a slender, curved blade and a shiny gold handle. Barbara had moved from the kitchen to right in front of me. She shoved me to the wall with one hand, and out of her other, pulled out a long bike lock cable. It was only now that I noticed the ring installed on the wall that was perfect for hooking a cable like that around.

Fortunately for me, I happened to come prepared to kill someone. Of course, I was hoping to only set the initial steps in motion to kill Chris Ressler in a way that would make it easy to cover my tracks, but I knew that in the worst-case scenario, I could just move things ahead of schedule. Of course, this was more likely the actual worst-case scenario. I didn’t carry guns with me, mostly because if they did tie the crime back to the weapon, replacing it after disposing of it would take forever, and even if I did there would be a paper trail if I bought it legally.

Instead, I carried the most standard-issue chef's knife I could find. If they wanted to tie the murder weapon back to somebody, they'd need to shake down every restaurant and home cook in the area. I pulled the knife out of my jacket pocket and made a deep gash across Barbara's hand.

She recoiled, and I got up while steadying myself. As I did, I felt a sudden, sharp pain in my torso. I looked down to see Barbara's daughter had taken the ornate knife Logan had brought down and slashed me with it. I tried to stand up again, but as I did, I felt the pain again, and I felt my body give out as I fell to the floor, and my eyes went dark.

I woke up standing, and as I tried to move I felt myself restrained by cold metal. I couldn't see anything, as the room I was in was almost completely pitch black. I felt warm and wet on the side of my torso where I had been stabbed. My arms also couldn't move, so I couldn't feel to check, but I imagine I was still bleeding there. I heard the voice of a little girl in the dark say "What are we doing this time? What are we doing this time?"

Barbara's voice responded, "Let's open the book and see what's left for us to do."

Then Logan's voice, "Boiling, crushing, the wheel, burning, drowning, the 'blood eagle'."

"Can we do the blood eagle this time? Can we?" the girl's voice responded.

"If we do that, I'm not cleaning it up." Logan's voice.

"We gotta do it eventually." the girl said.

I mustered up the energy to speak. "What do you want from me?" I croaked. "Why am I here?"

"All we want," Barbara said, "is your corpse. The kids need to see bodies."

There was brief silence as none of them spoke. The tension created by my waking appeared to have put a halt to whatever conversation the family was having before I started speaking.

It was Logan who broke the silence. "I don't want to see any bodies, mom."

Then, for the first time since waking up, I saw a light. A small flame flickered on top of a candle on the floor in front of Barbara, who had knelt down to light it. It illuminated the book I had seen Logan carrying down the stairs. The book was facing the other way, so I couldn't make out any of the other words, but I could see in between dense blocks of handwritten text there were numerous drawings of the human body, often contorted in extreme positions or accompanied by a large amount of red splotches. Barbara thumbed through the pages, each page with nearly identical text and images, but with more visible age as she went along. "You see this, kid? This is our family's history," she spoke, running her fingers along the pages as she turned them. "If I didn't internalize how natural and simple death - even brutal, nasty death - could be when I was a little girl, I wouldn't be able to show you it now."

"But why do I need to see it?"

"Someday, you're going to have to carry on the Allens family line - to have kids of your own, and you're going to need to teach them about violence." Barbara closed the book.

"Let's do 'the wheel' tonight. Keeps the mess in one place, makes cleaning up everything easier."

I heard footsteps, and saw a light on the other side of the room from an open door, with 3 silhouettes walking through it.

I only barely was able to watch as they left and the light from the doorway faded, as I felt myself drift back into unconsciousness.



Snowflower

By Maxine Aurelia-Ann Gamboa

AUTHOR-EDITOR'S NOTE: POEM ORIGINALLY WRITTEN ON 12/24/2022!

I am a snowflower,
My heart blooms in the winter
Yet I am always surprised when
The petals bloom from my chest
As if it was for the first time

The seeds in my lungs rattle like bones
In a ceramic jar
Roots sprouting out of my head in
Colors of amber and dark brown

For I am a snowflower,
I thrive in the coldest weather,
I fall in love when its cold
I fear the sun,
For it's flicks of gold resemble
The ones coated in my irises

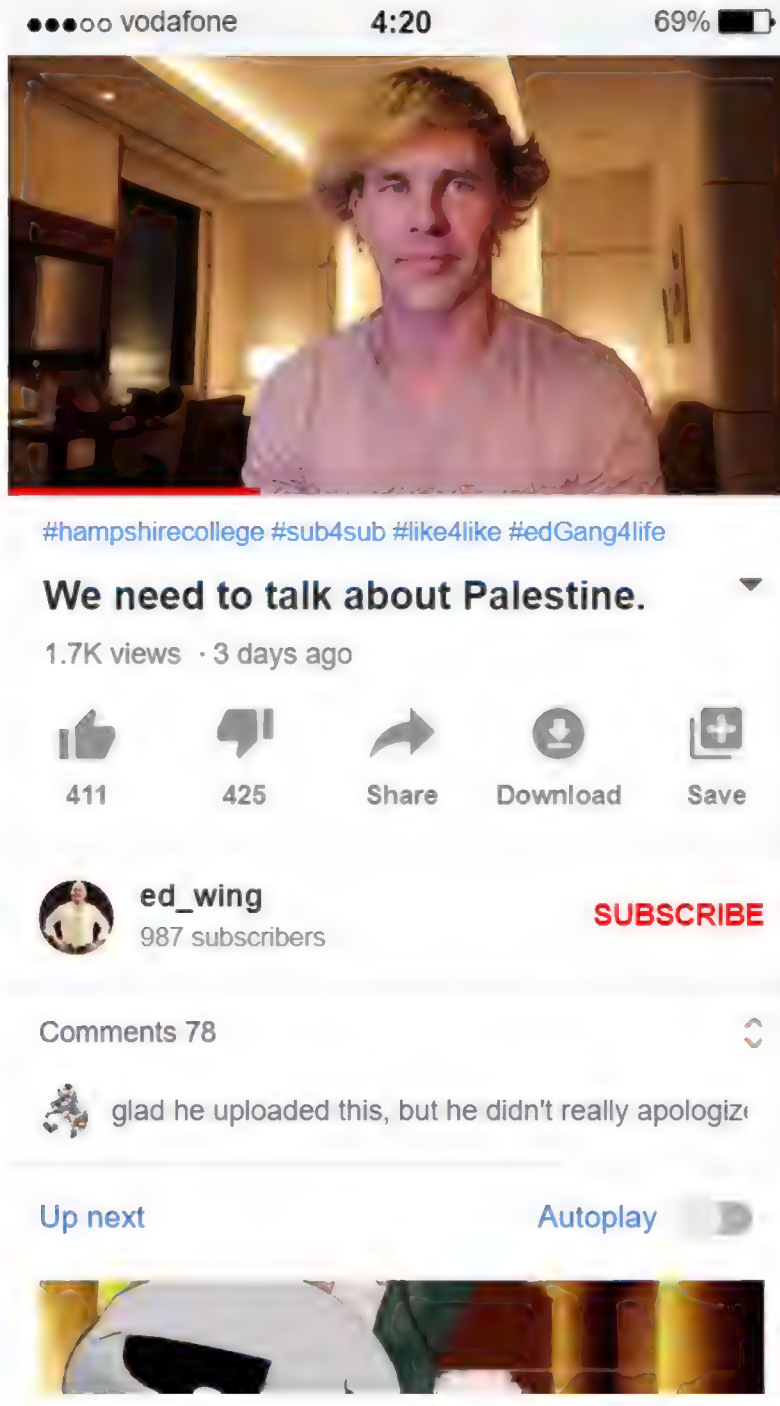
And I am once more reminded of my
Roots as a child of the sun,
Who has a snowflower for a heart



Section Hate

Ed's Apology Video

By Zack Fischer



stuff

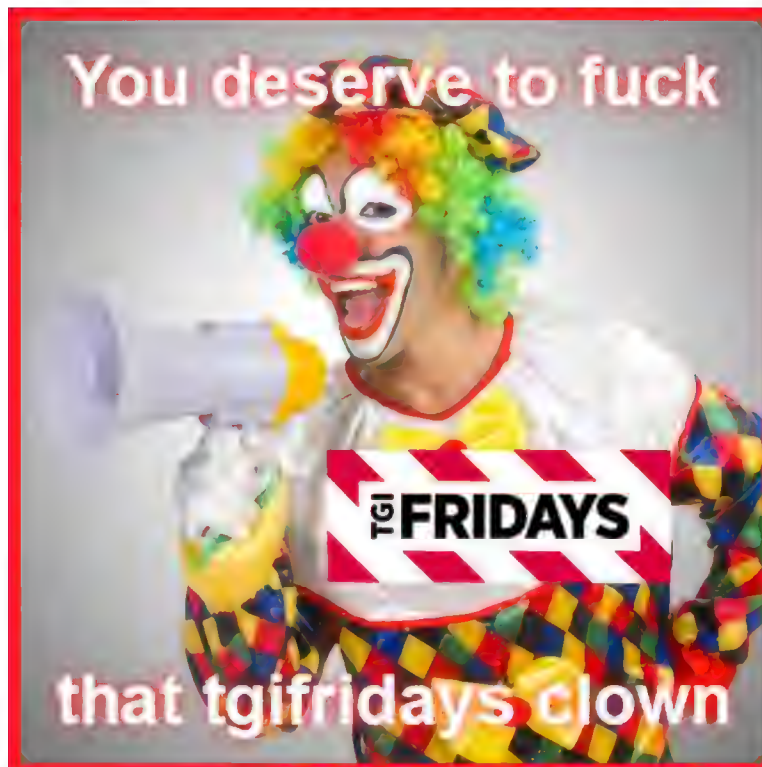
By Lazlo Rosenfield





no context *

By Leo Zhang



* this meme was made before i found out that he's actually 30, and as such i will not be fucking that tgi fridays clown. thank you to all my fans who supported me anyways



Me when...

The Hub is Unavailable

...and It's still not up hours later

Me at 12:16:



Me at 3:22:



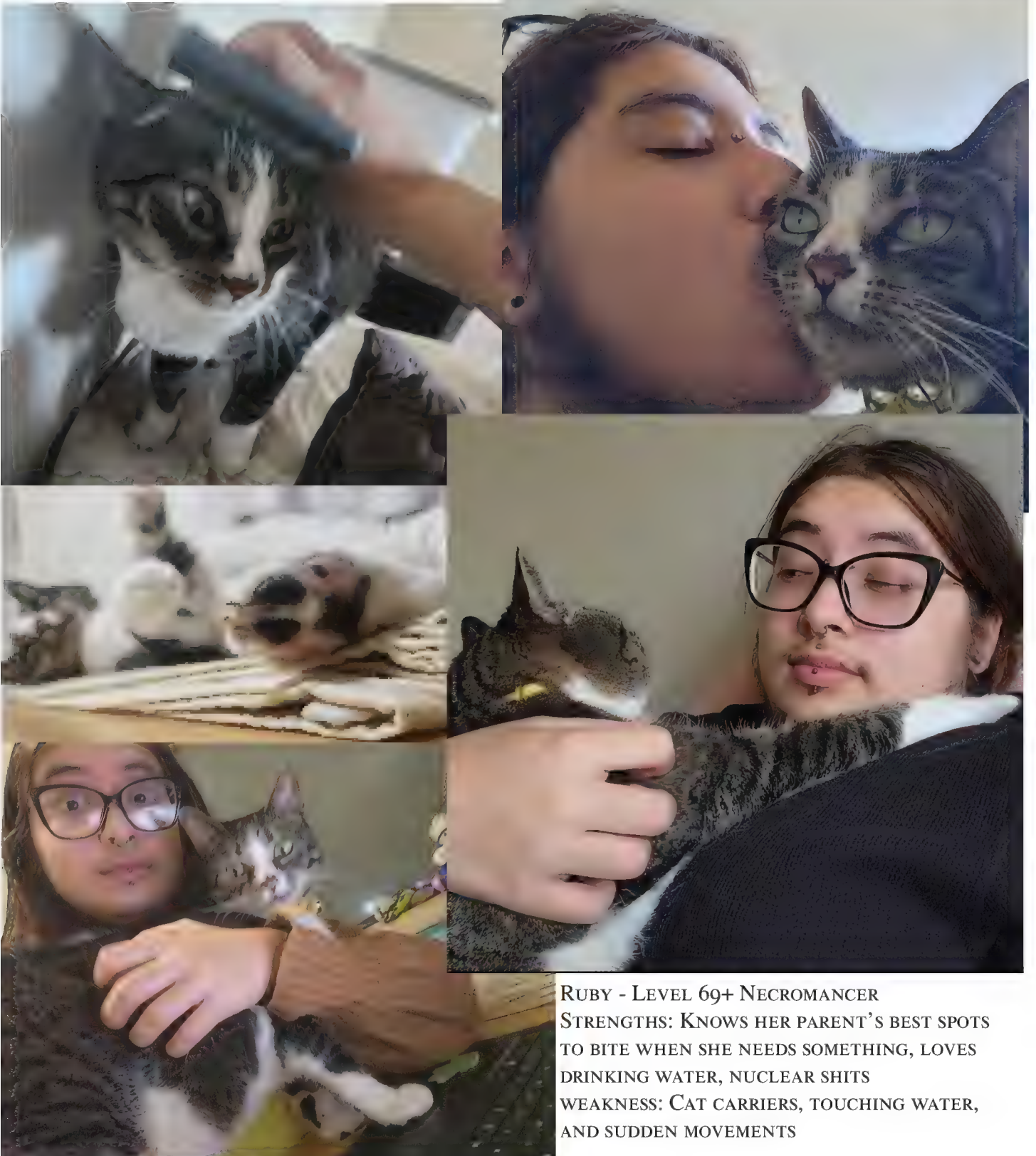
Me at 5:38:



Hampshire Hub vs Spring Class Registration, by Ellen Benedict



Surprise! It's Section Cat!



RUBY - LEVEL 69+ NECROMANCER

STRENGTHS: KNOWS HER PARENT'S BEST SPOTS
TO BITE WHEN SHE NEEDS SOMETHING, LOVES
DRINKING WATER, NUCLEAR SHITS

WEAKNESS: CAT CARRIERS, TOUCHING WATER,
AND SUDDEN MOVEMENTS

SECTION BEE?!



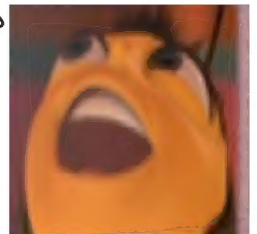


**Yes this is (nearly) the entire bee
movie script I (Max) ran out of ideas**





DID YOU GO?
 WHERE DID YOU GO?
 I'D BEEN WORRIED TONG TIME
 EYE JOE!
 WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? WHERE
 WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? COLTON-
 DID YOU GO?
 WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
 WHERE



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